



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: July 8, 2020.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

Members in Attendance: Daniel Amstutz, Aravind Basavapathruni, Ky Bertoli, Wayne Chouinard, Lenard Diggins, Chuck Giroux, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, Laura Swan.

Members Missing: Corey Rateau.

Members of Public in Attendance: Alison Piasecki, Galen Mook, Thomas Proctor, Linda Epstein, Paul Schlichtman, Brian Ristuccia, Anne Dinoto, Marc Colosimo.

1. Administration.

The Chair (Howard Muise) read the script for remotely conducted meetings, referred the members to the agenda attachment entitled “Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law”, and announced that the meeting was being recorded. The minutes of the June 10, 2020 meeting were approved by roll call vote.

Muise noted one email message dated June 18, 2020, from Christian Klein, Chair, Arlington ZBA, regarding a request for comments on updated materials on Thorndike Place, dated June 16. No comments were provided because there was no updated information on transportation.

2. Public Comments.

None.

3. Town Issues/Activities.

a. Wayne Chouinard provided updates from the Department of Public Works:

Pavement preservation, crack sealing and road rehabilitation is ongoing.

The installation of the new signals at Lake St., and the Minuteman Bikeway and Brooks Ave is moving along.

The Arlington Center Sidewalk project is ongoing.

The DPW is fully staffed and has returned to the office.

b. Daniel Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development:

The planning department is fully staffed but has not yet returned to the office.

The select board approved the removal of parking on Medford St. and Broadway for outdoor dining. Mike Rademacher, Department Director of the DPW, is coordinating the jersey barrier installation. Jeff Maxtutis inquired if the town applied for a MA shared street grant for the implementation. Amstutz replied no and mentioned using some existing barriers for this phase of outdoor dining and any forthcoming plans in the East and Heights.

Amstutz relayed a request from Jenny Raitt, Director of the DPCD, to review a traffic analysis study of the proposed hotel on Mass Ave for the ARB. A working group of Howard Muise, Jeff Maxtutis, Tycho Nightingale, Dan Amstutz and Scott Smith was established to review the study and site plans.

Amstutz reported results from an ABAC traffic count in front of Town Hall on June 25. There were almost 1,600 people counted in the 12 hours between 7 am and 7 pm. There were 450 people on bikes, 1,100 walkers, and another 120 pedestrians used the cross walk in front of Town Hall.

Amstutz noted that a transportation survey for Connect Arlington closes on 7/17 and a virtual forum will be held on 7/30.

4. Shared Street Pilot (Daniel Amstutz)

Amstutz noted the planning department's focus has been on the efforts to assist the Town's economic recovery specifically with respect to outdoor dining.

Jeff Maxtutis mentioned that he and Amstutz are members of MA APA and recently presented a case study for Arlington on a national planning webinar.

5. Arlington High School (Howard Muise)

Muise reminded the committee that in October 2018 a working group, consisting of Amstutz, Laube, Maxtutis and Muise, reviewed a draft traffic impact study for the Town Manager. Recently the TAC received a response to its original feedback in the form of a supplemental traffic impact and analysis study (TIAS). A draft review prepared by the working group contains a summary of recommendations by the consultant for improvements and identifies outstanding questions. Muise reviewed the study's recommendations and invited input from the committee.

The first recommendation of the study was that the Town should consider installing traffic signals at the Grove Street intersections with Summer Street and Massachusetts Avenue. Wayne noted the DPW project may impact the addition of a driveway to Grove Street. Scott Smith noted that the proposed signal at Grove Street and Massachusetts Avenue was less than 300 feet from the existing signal at Highland Street and Massachusetts Avenue, and asked if any coordination between the signals was considered. Daniel Amstutz noted the study did suggest signal coordination on Massachusetts Avenue but not on Summer street. Jeff Maxtutis clarified that the committee did not necessarily agree with TIAS recommendations and that the working group would finalize the review considering input from the committee. Wayne mentioned that in the context of new traffic signals an adaptive system for the Massachusetts Avenue corridor maybe worth considering. Maxtutis was supportive of an adaptive system but noted the gains will likely be seen at off peak periods. Laura Swan noted that the plan for the high school did identify a possible driveway off Grove Street. Muise noted the feasibility of the Grove Street driveway is dependent on plans for the DPW property.

The second recommendation of the study was that the Town should consider installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Mill Street, Mill Brook Drive and Millbrook Square Driveway along with "Do Not Block Intersection" signing and pavement markings. Maxtutis questioned the assumption that traffic would enter Schouler Court and proceed all the way around the back of the High School to Mill Street. He suggested the existing pattern, utilizing the bank parking lots for drop-off will persist. Muise indicated a major entrance to the school would be relocated to the rear which Paul Schlichtman confirmed.

The third recommendation Muise reviewed was that the Town should re-time the signal at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, Schouler Court and Lockeland Avenue after the new school building opens. Paul Schlichtman reviewed the construction schedule for the committee.

The fourth recommendation of the study included adjusting the pedestrian signal timing at the crosswalk on Massachusetts Avenue in front of the school to conform with current Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines. Smith wondered if bump outs would allow for a shorter signal. There was discussion about installing a flashing beacon versus the maintaining the current signal.

The fifth recommendation was for the Town to consider installing a pullout on eastbound Summer Street at the existing paved connection between the sidewalk on the south side of the street and the Minuteman Bikeway. Amstutz expressed doubts that three spaces for drop-off would be sufficient. Muise noted that people would be using that location for drop-off so a formalized location might be beneficial. Chouinard said there was a nearby town parcel over 150 feet long which may allow for more than three spaces. Amstutz noted the road was wide in this area and it maybe possible to achieve the lane without adjusting the curb.

The final recommendation reviewed concluded that a cycle track or cycle track elements cannot be implemented on Massachusetts Avenue without obtaining additional right-of-way. Amstutz indicated he did not support this recommendation because the consultant assumed no changes in existing lane use or width. Wayne expressed concerns that a short section of cycle track would be too segmented from the rest of Massachusetts Avenue east and west of the track. Maxtutis also preferred consistency versus a short section of cycle track. Muise noted a bump out for the signalized crosswalk may complicate any cycle track. Smith said his experience with cycle tracks in Somerville and Cambridge has been a mixed bag.

Muise solicited public input. Brian Ristuccia wondered if the plan was long-term aligned with the town's climate plans. Galen Mook argued that this could be a missed opportunity to influence a generation of commuting habits. He lamented the lack of emphasis on bike infrastructure. Anne Dinoto pointed out that community advocacy greatly changed plans for a similar corridor along Commonwealth Avenue near Boston University. Linda Epstein indicated support for parking restrictions on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue during drop-off and pick-up hours and pointed out that Cambridge Street in Cambridge has a short section of cycle track near the library.

6. Appleton St/Appleton PI/Mass Ave

Daniel Amstutz indicated that he had no update on the design review committee but noted that in the meantime Arlington Police Department established a no left-turn restriction from Massachusetts Avenue westbound onto Appleton St/Appleton PI during evening hours. Wayne Chouinard raised a concern about design by committee. Amstutz and

Muise pointed out that the Select Board had already approved the committee and membership. Lenard Diggins noted that he expected to be the Select Board liaison with TAC.

7. Thompson School Traffic Calming

Laura Swan noted that the uncertainty regarding school reopening in the fall may impact traffic as there may be limits to the number of students in the building at any one time. The group plans to meet with the Thompson School Principal to discuss various scenarios. Howard Muise asked when the playground was slated to rebuilt. Swan responded that it was slated for construction this summer. Muise suggested reviewing the plans for the playground for any impact on pedestrian flows.

8. Chestnut St. Traffic (Daniel Amstutz)

Howard Muise mentioned that the Select Board may be asked to establish a design review committee similar to the one for Appleton St/Appleton Pl/Mass Ave to study both short-term and long-term improvements in the area. Wayne Chouinard questioned the efficacy of another design committee.

The Chair proposed carrying over the remaining agenda items to the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.